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First confirmed record of *Agyrtria versicolor* (Trochilidae) for Peru

by André-A. Weller

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Among the five species of the Neotropical hummingbird genus *Agyrtria* endemic to South America (Weller 1998, 1999; formerly included in *Amazilia*), the Versicolored Emerald *A. versicolor* has the widest geographical distribution, ranging from the lowlands of southern Venezuela and eastern Colombia southward to north-eastern Argentina (Misiones) and south-eastern Brazil (Meyer de Schauensee & Phelps 1978, Hilty & Brown 1986, Sick 1993). Five subspecies are currently recognized (Weller 1999; Fig. 1): *A. v. milleri* (Venezuela south of Río Orinoco, C Colombia, NE Peru, N Brazil), *A. v. hollandi* (SE Venezuela, W Guyana), *A. v. nitidifrons* (NE Brazil), *A. v. kubitcheki* (interior S Brazil, C Paraguay, NE Argentina), and *A. v. versicolor* (SE Brazil). The closely related taxon *A. rondoniae*, known only from the upper Río Madeira (W Brazil to NE Bolivia), is considered specifically distinct (Weller 1999), based on reported sympatry with *A. versicolor* (Ruschi 1982), contrary to Sick (1993) who suggested it was a subspecies of the latter.

A. v. milleri is the most widespread subspecies, being mainly restricted to the basins of the Orinoco and Amazon and their tributaries (Fig. 1). The western distributional limits were considered to be in central Colombia, where the taxon has been recorded from Arauca and Meta southward to Caquetá (Nicéforo & Olivares 1967, Hilty & Brown 1986; specimen data). Moreover, a number of specimens are known from the "Bogotá collections", but it may be reasonably presumed that these birds were actually collected in the region east of the Andes because the taxon is absent from the western slope of the Cordillera Oriental and from all other mountain

ranges belonging to the northern Andes (see also Berlioz & Jouanin 1944). The same applies to records from Mérida, Venezuela (e.g., SMF 80554; see also Hartert 1900), this place representing most likely another commercial trading place, while specimens actually came from the trans-Andean lowlands.

In the south-west of the taxon's range, no confirmation (but see Weller 1999) exists for Peru since Zimmer (1950) questioned a record from Iquitos, uppermost Río Amazon, mentioned by Simon (1910). Unfortunately, the latter provided no further comments on this locality and later even excluded Peru from the range of *milleri* (Simon 1921). Other authors such as Taczanowski (1884), Hartert (1900), Peters (1945) and, more recently, Parker *et al.* (1982) and Ruschi (1986) did not mention a Peruvian record of *A. versicolor*.

There is, however, a confirmed record of *A. v. milleri* from Iquitos. This is based on an apparently overlooked specimen deposited in the bird collection of the Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg, Frankfurt/Main (SMF 80523). According to the original label, it was obtained in August 1885 by H. v. Berlepsch and collected in "N.O. (= northeastern) Peru: Yquitos, Amaz. sup." on 6 (?) May 1878 by H. Whitely. Since Hellmayr (1910) and Stephens & Traylor (1983) indicated that Whitely conducted field work in the Iquitos region between April and September 1878, little doubts exist about the origin of this specimen. Hence Iquitos (Loreto, 106 m, 03°46'S,

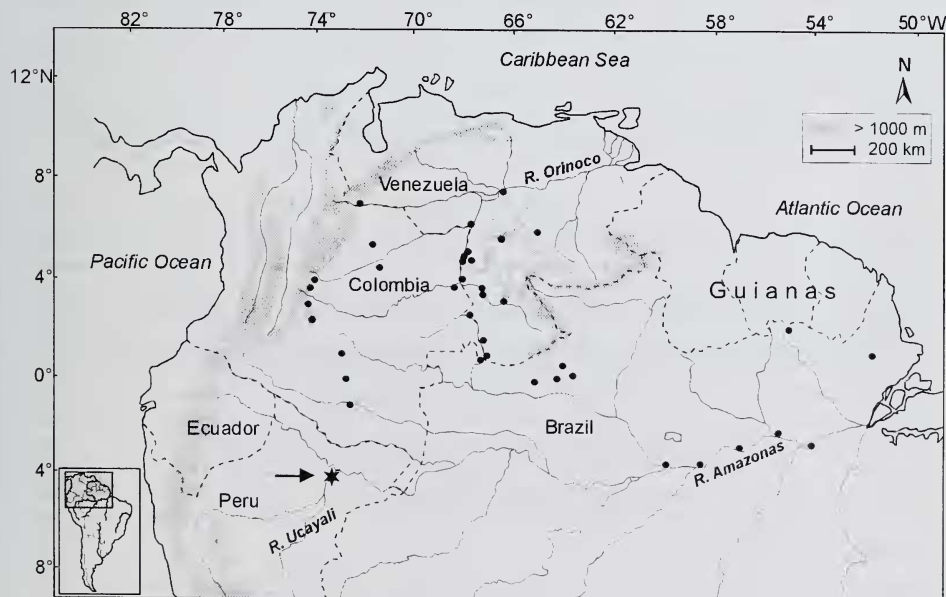


Figure 1. Distribution of *Agyrtia versicolor milleri*, based on examined specimens. Asterisk with arrow indicates single Peruvian locality Iquitos; dashed lines are political borders.

73°15'W; Stephens & Traylor 1983) is the only confirmed collecting site of *A. versicolor* for Peru as well as the south-westernmost record of *milleri*.

The SMF specimen is most likely an adult male (as noted on the label) which is indicated by its plumage colouration, e.g., the strongly glittering turquoise blue head feathers, extending to lores and neck, and by mensural characters (bill including operculum: 18.2 mm; wing, unflattened: 48.6 mm; rectrix 5: 27.6 mm; cf. Weller 1998). Females and immatures differ in these features by their less glittering and more turquoise crown feathers. Moreover, females exhibit greyish subterminal patches on the outermost tail feathers and have generally shorter wings and outer rectrices than males (Weller 1998). The back and rump of the Iquitos specimen are slightly darker, more emerald green to bluish green coloured, than in individuals from Colombia and Venezuela which have these plumage parts rather bronze-green.

Like other lowland amaziline trochilines of South America (e.g., *Polyerata fimbriata*; Weller 2000), *A. versicolor* inhabits chiefly semi-open habitats like *cerrados* (in Brazil) and edges of humid and gallery forests, ranging from near sea-level to c. 600 m (SE Colombia). The disjunct localities of specimen records for *A. v. milleri*, mostly located on riversides (Fig. 1), probably reflect collecting gaps rather than discontinuities in range since the preferred habitats are widespread across Amazonia. Similar distribution gaps, resulting from incomplete sampling, are assumed for several high-altitude Andean bird taxa, among them many hummingbirds (J. Haffer, pers. comm., Schuchmann *et al.* 2001). Assuming a continuous distribution within the western part of its range, *A. v. milleri* may also occur in the Río Putumayo and Río Napo drainages and thus might be still present in eastern Amazonian Peru. At the southern limits, no definite localities based on specimen records are known south of the Amazon, though one observation of *A. versicolor* from Porto Velho, Río Madeira (Ruschi 1982), probably refers to this race.

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Further observations of a *Microeca* flycatcher from the Bismarck Archipelago, Papua New Guinea

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The genus *Microeca* contains six species, in the family *Petroicidae*, the Australo-Papuan Robins, a heterogeneous group of small to medium-sized insectivorous birds in 14 genera (Sibley & Monroe 1990). The *Microeca* species strongly resemble the Old World flycatchers in appearance and behaviour but are restricted to New Guinea and Australia, except for the Golden-bellied Flycatcher *M. hemixantha* which is